

REMARKS

Claims 1-37 are pending, Claims 1, 8, 15 and 27 are in independent form. Claims 15 and 27 have been amended. No new matter has been added by way these amendments.

Claims 1-37 are pending and stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Allen et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,995,884 (“Allen et al.”) in view of Roy et al., “Surface Sensing and Classification for Efficient Mobile Robot Navigation” (“Roy et al.”). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections and request reconsideration and withdrawal.

Applicants submit the claims, as amended, are allowable over the references cited because the references cited fail to disclose at least one element recited in every pending claim. More specifically, each independent claim now recites “operation in the soft surface mode including rotating a sweeper of the robot cleaner more than in the hard surface mode.” In other words, the invention as currently claimed not only includes a soft surface mode and a hard surface mode, but the selection of that mode influences a relative speed of a sweeper. In the hard surface mode, the sweeper moves at one or more relatively slower speeds, and in the soft surface mode, the sweeper moves at one or more relatively faster speeds.

This feature is not taught or suggested by Allen et al. or Roy et al. alone or in combination. Per the Examiner’s admission, Allen et al. does not teach “a hard surface mode [and] a soft surface mode.” (June 28, 2006 Office action, page 3, lines 7-9) Consequently, Allen et al. does not teach or suggest “operation in the soft surface mode including rotating a sweeper of the robot cleaner more than in the hard surface mode.” Roy et al. teaches a surface sensing technique that encompasses hard and soft surfaces. However, Roy et al. does not teach or suggest “operation in the soft surface mode including rotating a sweeper of the robot cleaner more than in the hard surface mode.” In other words, neither prior art reference teaches or suggests using the surface type to influences a relative speed of the sweeper. Because the prior art fails to teach or suggest this limitation, Applicants submit that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are improper and should be withdrawn.

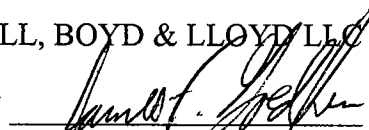
In view of the foregoing, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim rejections. Should the Examiner wish to discuss the Amendment, or any matter of form in an effort to advance this application toward allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the indicated number.

The Director is authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 02-1818 under Order No. 112440-135.

Respectfully submitted,

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